

From: SAN BRUNO ARCHIVE

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Notes: Inadvertant release of material into Bay

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Mr. Ray O'Day
Head, Health Physics Branch
University of California Radiation Laboratory
Berkeley, California

Dear Mr. O'Day,

On February 25, 1954, while loading the disposal barge with drums of waste material provided by your activity for disposal by this Laboratory, twenty-nine of the drums were accidentally dropped into the Bay at the pier's edge due to failure of the barge hopper doors. Salvage efforts resulted in recovery of all of the drums, but not without a certain degree of difficulty, and unacceptable hazard to the safety of personnel, due to the weights involved.

We consider that most of the difficulty and all of the personnel hazard, exclusive of that normally experienced by divers due solely to their position underwater, can be attributed to (a) the manner of packaging the waste, (b) the handling features of the drums and (c) the material condition of certain of the drums. Consequently, we feel that certain changes must be made in the manner of packaging waste products for disposal, in order to eliminate unacceptable risk which might again be occasioned through similar incidents as that mentioned above.

The following requirements for packaging waste products in drum containers to be handled by this activity are submitted for your guidance in future operations:

1. Present packaging methods and specifications are to be continued with two exceptions. (a) The concrete closure should be recessed one and one-half inches ($1\frac{1}{2}$ ") inside the drum to permit handling by chime hooks and (b) the wire eye used for handling the drums on their ends should extend through the concrete closure for a distance of at least ten inches (10").

2. All drums should be inspected and/or tested before use and no drums retaining less than 75% of their original strength should be used.

Additionally, as an aid to control and accounting in the event of accident or emergency, we suggest that each drum in any one disposal shipment be serially numbered in some manner that will provide a ready means of ascertaining the exact status of all drums in the shipment at any given time.

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We regret the necessity of having to impose these additional requirements in connection with this matter of waste disposal, but feel that we cannot compromise personnel safety under any conditions which may be corrected so easily. In order not to inconvenience your organization due to these new packaging requirements, we will except for disposal any waste packaged in the usual manner prior to implementation of the procedures requested herein.

Your consideration and cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

R. A. KIMMEL
Captain, USN
Director

Copy to:

Mr. E.D. Flechstein
U.S. Atomic Energy Comm.
San Francisco Field Off.

see file from U.C.
R30-137-54
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